

TWO SHIPS LAUNCHED

The Kearsarge and the Kentucky Pat
Afloat at Newport News.

AN EVENT OF UNUSUAL INTEREST.

Ceremonies Attended by Great Crowds
from This and Other States.

ANCIENT CUSTOMS ARE LAID ASIDE.

One is Christened by Married Lady, and
One With Water.

GLIDE IN THE WATER GRACEFULLY.

Both of the Defenders Float Majestically
Out on the James.

COURTESIES TO THE FAIR SPONSORS.

Mrs. Winslow and Miss Bradley Re-
ceive Attention and Flowers.

BANQUET AT THE CHAMBERLIN.

A Brilliant Company Assembles, and
Speeches Are Made by Governors
Tyler, Bradley, and Others—Thous-
ands Go Down from Richmond.

The two greatest warships ever built in America, the equal of any in the world, were launched at Newport News yesterday within the short space of two hours. The ceremonies attending the event were witnessed by a crowd probably larger than any which ever assembled on a similar occasion. Warships have frequently been launched near large cities, and the crowds which witnessed the work were not nearly so great as that which stood upon the bank of the James yesterday and the decks of craft upon its bosom. From the North, the East, the South, the West came throngs of American men and women, eager to see these two mighty defenders of American honor consigned to the bosom of the noble James.

The threat of war with a foreign nation, the possibility that the more serious battleships of the future will follow the sentimental ceremonies of yesterday, doubtless had a great deal to do with quickening the popular enthusiasm and heightening the popular interest in the mighty engines of destruction. It was a great pageant, a splendid spectacle, impressive, sublime.

The strains of martial airs helped to swell the enthusiasm, the ringing of bells made merry music, the voices from a hundred giant-throated whistles sought to drown all sound, but of far deeper significance, and more inspiring and more beautiful, was the mighty, spontaneous, prolonged shouts from the thousands of American throats when the new defenders rested upon the broad bosom of the James. For wealth can build a thousand such engines of war as the Kearsarge and Kentucky, but wealth cannot create patriotism or bind all sections of a great nation together in bonds so close as those which were evidenced by the enthusiasm of the mighty throng at the Newport News ship-yard yesterday.

DETAILS OF DOUBLE LAUNCHING.

Kearsarge Christened With Wine.

The Kentucky With Water.
NEWPORT NEWS, VA., March 24.—(Special.)—The battleships Kearsarge and Kentucky are in their natural element, and an undertaking without precedent in the annals of marine architecture has been successfully accomplished—two formidable battleships have been launched on the same day from the same ship-yard.

Mrs. Herbert Winslow, wife of Lieutenant-Commander Herbert Winslow, United States navy, performed the baptismal honors for the Kearsarge, and Miss Christine Bradley, daughter of Hon. William O. Bradley, Governor of the Blue Grass State, was sponsor for the Kentucky. Both vessels were christened in a manner contrary to the traditions cherished by sailors. A superstition of the sea is to the effect that a ship whose god-mother is a married woman is doomed to ill luck. The wife of a naval officer christened the Kearsarge. In the case of the Kentucky, Miss Bradley, with ruthless homoclasm, ignored the time-honored custom of breaking a bottle of champagne upon the vessel's prow, and substituted nature's pure nectar for sparkling wine.

These departures from established precedent had served, in themselves, to create widespread interest in the latest additions to Uncle Sam's fleet. Such trifling things, however, were forgotten to-day in the deeper significance which

attaches to the baptism of two mighty battleships, because of the events which have recently quickened the pulse of the nation.

The launching of a battleship is a momentous event at any time, but at this juncture, when two monster defenders kiss the waves in the space of two hours, the undertaking and its attendant ceremonies assume a magnitude and importance never before equalled. This is why probably 30,000 spectators, two-thirds of whom were visitors to the city, saw the Kearsarge and Kentucky plunge into the historic James this morning.

SURGING MASSES OF HUMANITY.

Long before the hour announced for the launching to take place, all the available space in the vicinity of the ways on which the hulls of the ships rested was occupied by a seething mass of humanity, swaying to and fro like waves driven by the force of a storm. Out on the river floated hundreds of craft of absolutely every description, from the skiff and tiny sailboat to the great passenger steamer and man of war, all except the latter crowded to the utmost capacity with eager sightseers. The national vessels on the James were the cruiser Brooklyn, the monitor Puritan, and the cutters Hamilton and Winthrop.

Most of the vast crowd of people gained entrance to the ship-yard through the gate at the southern end, while the offices of the company were practically deserted, only a comparatively small number of people making an effort to gain admittance as they walked. When the ceremony was once inside of the yard everything else was forgotten in the eagerness and haste displayed by all to gain some point of vantage from which the double christening might be best seen. The centre of attraction was, of course, the two immense vessels, which rested lazily on the rusty-grooved ways in anticipation of the moment that they for the first time would be gently lowered in the waters of the historic James. The ways are at the eastern end of the yard, and from once in practically the same place were launched La Grande Duchesse, the Creole, and other of the many handsome liners that have been built at the local yard since its inception. Not far from the twin vessels the Illinois, destined to be the Queen of the American Navy, rests on her ways, well on the road to completion.

Before the time for the launching had arrived, the crowd had made a complete examination of the two ships as they proudly courted christening at the hands of their fair sponsors. Notwithstanding the fact that the monitors are in every respect alike, the ones in the crowd who desired to impress others with the opinion that they knew whereof they spoke were heard to compare the lines of the ships, some declaring that the most graceful symmetry was the Kentucky's, while others championed the Kearsarge.

The Illinois was not deserted in interest that centered round the other two vessels, and animated discussions were entered into as to the fighting qualifications of the Illinois, whose construction, naval experts say, will place the local ship-yard at the top of the list of ship-building concerns. Meanwhile, the merry hum of the hammer as the workmen, proud of their handiwork, prepared the ways, and the deep for their maiden dip in the placid waters of the historic James.

The Kearsarge Christened First.

The Kearsarge had been selected to leave the ways first, and in an incredibly short time every point of vantage in the vicinity of the huge hull, whose dulled sides, towered above its birthplace, was swarming with men and women anxious to have a good view of the interesting ceremony about to take place. Suddenly the vast throng parted, and through a lane flanked on either side by thousands of curious faces, sturdy, broad-shouldered workmen, with heavy hammers in their muscular hands, strode to their places on either side of the ship. Then, at a preconcerted signal, the hammers rose and fell upon the white-wedged timbers that were to lift the weight of the vessel from the ground ways to the cradle, or sliding ways, on which the trip to the water was to be made.

Again the multitude opened up a path, and in the midst of an outburst of enthusiastic applause, the christening party passed through and ascended the stand at the bow of the Kearsarge.

The sound of the hammers from beneath the hull grew fainter and fainter, and then died away altogether.

Now the rasping sound of a single saw, as it ate its way through the solid pieces holding the ship in position, caused the surging crowd to press closer around the vessel, while a silence as still as death held sway.

On the christening stand Mrs. Winslow, daughter-in-law of the man who commanded the old Alabama, held the traditional bottle of champagne in her hand ready to perform the function of sponsor.

SHE GLIDES INTO THE WATER.

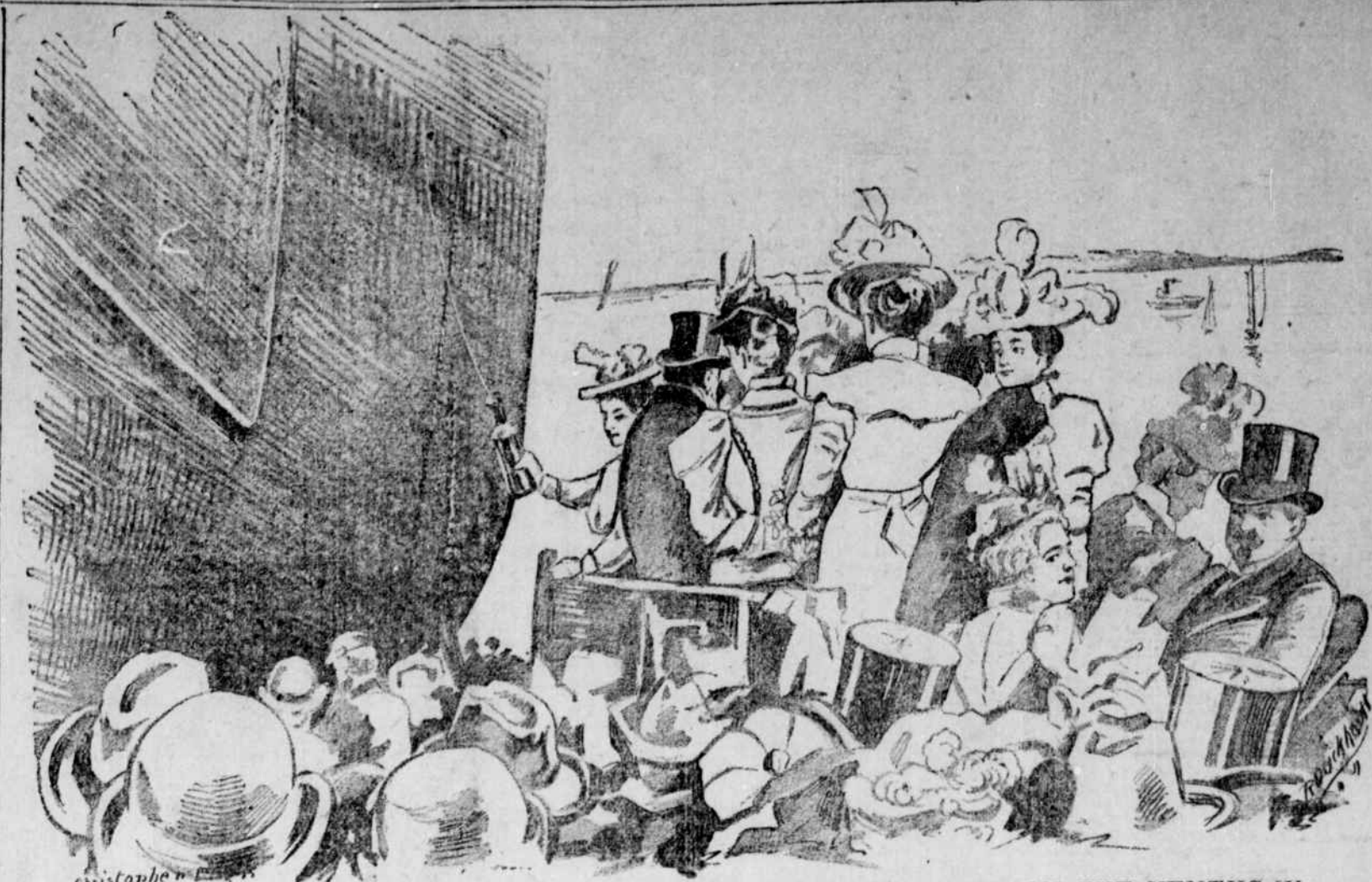
As the saw cut through the stout oak plank, there was a sharp crack, and a perceptible shiver shot through the large steel frame. Exactly at 12:02 o'clock the Kearsarge slowly started down the ways. Mrs. Winslow dashed the bottle against the bow of the receding vessel, and in a voice which rang out clear and distinct, exclaimed:

"I christen thee Kearsarge!"

And majestically the Kearsarge traversed the ways, the flags and banners swung from every available point above the steel decks, fluttering proudly in the breeze.

As her stern struck the water and she glided off into the channel with the buoyant grace of a skiff, cheer after cheer went up from the mighty throng, while shrieking whistles, tinkling bells, and waving flags welcomed the new naval champion to her natural element.

Then followed a scene hard to describe. Thousands strained to get a more perfect



MISS C. R. SINE BRADLEY BREAKING THE BOTTLE OF WATER ON THE KENTUCKY.

(Drawn from a Photograph Taken Especially for The Dispatch.)

view of the magnificent ship, and the eager crowd surged to the water's edge to get the better prospect. Chasing was incessant as the enthusiastic spectators gave full vent of their patriotic feelings. It was a scene confusing and dazzling. Fussy little tugs swarmed around the Kearsarge and brought her back to one of the ship-yard piers, where the finishing touches will be put on.

The first launching had been successfully accomplished.

The Kentucky is Christened.

A few yards to the north of the Kearsarge lay the Kentucky, whose symmetrical lines made it a fit representative of the State famous for racing horses and beautiful women. The workmen now directed their attention to this vessel, while the crowd surged around the end of the immense crane which stood between the two twin sisters, and impatiently awaited the second event.

The inspiring strains of Dixie rose upon the air, and twelve companies of Virginia troops, headed by the Naval Post Band, from the Norfolk navy-yard, entered the grounds, and were drawn up to the right of the christening party, on the tall stand at the prow of the Kentucky. The detachment was composed of the Lee Rifles, of Norfolk, Captain H. H. Sheen; the Norfolk City Guard,

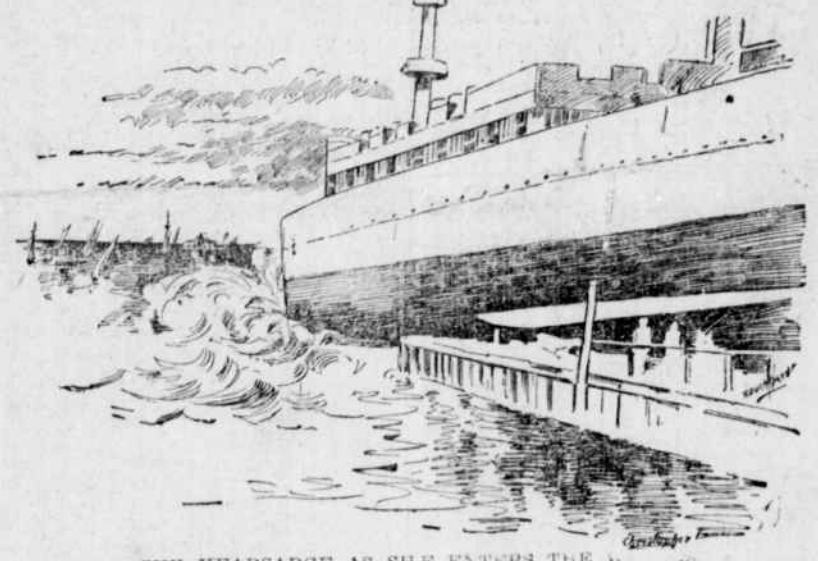
ley poised the glistening bottle high in the air and dashed it against the receding bow. The cut-glass flew into a thousand fragments, while the clear water, in crystal drops, sprinkled the ways beneath. There was a great scramble for pieces of the glass as souvenirs of the occasion.

Miss Bradley's "I christen thee, Kentucky!" was distinctly heard, and seemed to awaken all the latent enthusiasm in the breasts of the Kentuckians.

THE SCENE MOST INSPIRING.

Then followed one of the most remarkable scenes ever witnessed at a launching. As the majestic ship leisurely started down the slope several pint bottles of whiskey were dashed against the side of the Kentucky. The smashing of glass was heard above the din and confusion, and in another instant the air was redolent with the fumes of old Kentucky "Bourbon." This libation was offered by some of the members of the Bluegrass contingent, who were determined that no hoodoo should rest upon the great vessel.

Without undue haste the vessel traversed the ways, and a moment later was afloat upon the historic James. Again the shrieking whistles welcomed the second addition to Uncle Sam's fleet in one day from the same yard, and again pandemonium reigned in the throng which had



THE KEARSARGE AS SHE ENTERS THE WATER.

witnessed the consummation of this great undertaking.

The distinguished visitors then boarded the handsome steamer Newport News, of the Norfolk and Washington Line, and were taken to Old Point, where the launching banquet was held at 2 o'clock.

FLOWERS PRESENTED TO SPONSORS.

Immediately after the Kearsarge was sent to the ways, little Joseph McDonald, one of the apprentice boys who carried rivets to the workmen on the Kearsarge, stepped forward, clad in a brand-new suit of overalls, and carrying in one hand a miniature state flag and in the other a beautiful ship of American Beauty roses. The latter he presented to Mrs. Winslow, who gracefully accepted the fragrant model of the Kearsarge.

After the christening of the Kentucky, Miss Bradley was signally honored by the local and national organizations of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. On behalf of the Newport News Chapter, Mrs. Thomas Sharp presented two baskets of Marched Nell roses, and for the local Young Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Miss Louise Hopkins gave roses and hyacinths. The Loyal Temperance Legion, of Norfolk, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, of that city, sent carnations and ferns, and the State organization presented, through Mrs. R. H. Jones, of Norfolk, a beautiful basket of American Beauties.

Mrs. Thacker, of New Jersey, the National Superintendent of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Work of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, presented white carnations. The C. P. Huntington Republican League, of Newport News, presented flowers through Miss Florence Jennings.

Mrs. Fitzhugh Lee was presented with a beautiful basket of flowers by the Newport News Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy. The wife of the American Consul-General at Havana, was heartily cheered when the flowers were presented.

Miss Bradley distributed the flowers among those on the stand, throwing roses with gay abandon and royal generosity, which were caught by the gentlemen about her, and preserved as mementoes of the occasion.

SOME OF THE NOTABLE GUESTS.

Among the distinguished guests on the christening platform were Governor J. Hoge Tyler, Governor William O. Bradley, and their staffs; General Nelson A. Miles, commander in chief of the United States army; Admiral Mathews, United States navy; Commanders McNaughton and Wallace, Senator Thomas S. Martin, of Virginia; Senator J. L. Rawlings, of Utah; Representatives Jacob Yost, W. A. Jones, and Peter Otey, of Virginia; J. H. Hopkins, of Illinois; D. H. Smith, of Kentucky; C. R. Orcutt, president Newport News Ship-Building and Dry-Dock Company; Naval-Constructor J. J. Woodward and wife, Mrs. George E. Pickett, Miss Belle Tyler, Miss Miles, Miss Mary Orcutt, and Mrs. Bradley.

MISS BRADLEY'S COSTUME.

At the christening ceremonies Miss Bradley wore a beautiful creation in light-gray cloth, made with demitrain, with white satin yoked bodice appliqued with jet and steel passementerie. A gray velvet hat and nodding gray plumes and purple violets completed her costume. At the evening festivities at the Chamberlin

BANQUET AT THE CHAMBERLIN.

A Brilliant Gathering—Speeches by Gov's Tyler, Bradley and Others.

NEWPORT NEWS, VA., March 24.—(Special.)—The world's greatest shipbuilding event closed with a brilliant launching banquet given at the Chamberlin Hotel. After the vessel was launched the distinguished visitors who came down from Washington on the steamer Newport News were given an opportunity to inspect the mammoth plant. Many of the congressmen and naval officers were shown through the various departments, manifesting interest in the country's greatest shipbuilding industry. At 1:30 o'clock, the Newport News hailed in her lines and headed for Old Point. The run was made in 30 minutes.

Mr. C. B. Orcutt, president of the Newport News Ship-Building and Dry-Dock Company, led the way to the Chamberlin Hotel, where covers had been laid for 700 guests.

THE BANQUET HALL.

The banquet was given in the ballroom, and when the doors were swung open the spacious hall presented a scene of brilliancy. Feasted about the large white pillars and arches were the Stars and Stripes, State flags of Virginia and Kentucky, and the colors of the navy. The combination of colors presented a pleasing picture to the eye. When the guests were seated there was not a vacant seat. The dining hall then presented a dazzling scene. There were many of Virginia's and Kentucky's fairest daughters, surrounded by admirals, commodores, colonels, captains, and lieutenants, in their glided uniforms glistening in the electric lights. At the northern end of the hall a platform had been erected for the guests of honor, which included Governor J. Hoge Tyler, of Virginia; Governor W. O. Bradley, of Kentucky; United-States-Senator S. Martin, of Virginia; Mr. E. Insull, president of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company; Congressman R. S. Hopkins, of Illinois; United-States-Senator J. L. Rawlings, of Utah; Admiral Mathews, and Commodore Watson and McNaughton, United States navy. President Orcutt occupied the seat in the centre of the platform. It was not long after the guests were seated that the popping and fizzing of champagne bottles mingled with the rattling of dishes and the hum of voices. One hour was spent around the festal board, while the elegant collation was served in courses.

THE PRESIDENT AND NAVY.

Then Mr. Orcutt arose amid a storm of handclappings. Briefly the chief executive of the ship-building company expressed the pleasure he felt in having so

many guests to honor the company's greatest achievement. This brought forth another wave of applause. Then, as toastmaster for the occasion, Mr. Orcutt called on the guests to rise and drink a toast to the President of the United States. This done, Congressman Hopkins, of Illinois, was called on to respond to the toast "Our President." The speaker was in good voice. In part, he said: "There is no man who has occupied the position of President of the United States I would more willingly respond to than that great American, William McKinley. (Applause.) The accident of birth has given other countries their rulers. Some have developed their country; but most of them were despicable characters. In this country, thank God, it is different. By the suffrages of the people, we choose our ruler. The present Chief Executive is a typical American. His life has been an open book, and he stands close to the people. This was well illustrated the other day, when Congress unanimously voted to place money at his disposal to carry out Americanism. I think God will have as President a man who is so well rounded and complete." (Applause.)

Rawlings responded in a brief speech, declaring that a strong navy was not only a guarantee of peace, but a comforting thing in time of war.

GOVERNOR TYLER SPEAKS.

The toast to the "Old Dominion" was responded to by his Excellency, Governor Tyler, of Virginia, who was most felicitous in welcoming the Governor of Kentucky on the auspicious day, when two battleships were launched, one in the name of the daughter State. He told several anecdotes, one of which, if it had not been for the regrettably reflected upon the breaking of old customs in the manner of christening ships, The Governor disclaimed oratory as his especial forte, and alluding to his recent visit to the oyster section on official language, as a friend of a friend, "It is with peculiar pride and pleasure that I arise to respond to the sentiment proposed. The incidents of to-day add another page to the annals of this proud Mother Commonwealth. She has ever been to the forefront in peace as in war, in material as in intellectual development. As she gave to the world, for the world's betterment, a Washington, a Madison, a Monroe, a Jefferson, a Jackson, and a Lee, so in the onward progress of this nineteenth century, she has kept abreast with that advancement, and has furnished to our commerce an El Sol, an El Nord, and a Grand Ducet, and for our nation's defence a Raleigh and a Texas. To-day we witnessed a spectacle which has no parallel in the annals of this country, at least, of the keels of two mammoth battleships gliding over their ways from Virginia's shores into Virginia's historic waters—historic in the naval battle which which, fought here some thirty-odd years ago, revolutionized the nature of the entire world. We are proud of our rising young city, yet in her teens, and I confidently expect at no future day to see her second to no ship-building port in the world. Let not our more distinguished sea-coast metropolis begrudge the natural advantages which this nature has enriched Newport News, for never did jealousy bring greater commercial success or imprint high character upon a nation.

COMPLIMENT TO MISS BRADLEY.

"It is a peculiar pleasure to me to welcome upon this occasion the Chief Magistrate of Virginia, the Blue-Grass daughter within the domain of the old Commonwealth. The old Mother State has reason to be proud of Kentucky beyond all her other daughters. She has kept alive the old traditions, and even surpassed the mother in her artistic spirit, so that the ability of the average Kentuckian is the envy of the average Virginian." (CONCLUDED ON NINTH PAGE.)

GREAT ACTIVITY.

Energetic and Warlike Measures Follow
Each Other Fast.

SPANISH FLOTILLA LEAVES CANARIES

It Sails For Porto Rico, Thus Threatening
This Country.

SIGNIFICANT NAVAL ORDERS AT ONCE

"Fighting Bob" Evans Directed to
Take Command of the Iowa.

IMPORTANT WHITE HOUSE TALKS.

Leaders in Congress Seen With Reference
to Unanimity of Action.

PRESIDENT HOPES TO AVERT WAR.

Preparations For It, However, Will Not
Be Interrupted.

MAINE REPORT IN WASHINGTON.

It Will Be Sent to Congress Monday—
Question of Intervention in Cuba
Will Be Considered Independently
and Later.

WASHINGTON, March 24.—The last day before the arrival of the report of the Maine court of inquiry was one of unexampled activity in all official quarters. Advice came early that the Spanish torpedo flotilla had sailed from the Canaries for Porto Rico, and from this moment the most energetic warlike measures followed each other in constant succession. The movement of this fleet had been watched with the keenest interest, as it was felt that it involved serious possibilities, which might compel the United States Government to protest against it as of a hostile character.

Immediately on the receipt of an official dispatch from one of our naval attaches abroad, briefly announcing the sailing of the fleet, the fact was made known to the President, and an earnest conference was held between him and Secretary Long and Assistant Secretary Roosevelt. The seriousness of the movement was fully considered, and the President was advised that naval strategists considered it important that this torpedo fleet should not be allowed to reach western waters. What exclusion was reached is not known.

In the day, the Spanish Minister, Senor Polo y Bernabe, called at the State Department, and spent some time with Judge Day. It is naturally inferred that the approach of the Spanish fleet, was one of the subjects referred to. Whether, however, there was any suggestion against this move was not disclosed by either Judge Day or the Spanish Minister, both of whom maintained the strictest reticence regarding their conference.

NAVAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

Following the flotilla announcement, important news came rapidly. The first was this announcement by Secretary Long, indicating the placing of our squadron and fleet on a war-footing:

"Admiral Leard has been ordered, leave very much to the regret of the Navy Department, on account of ill health.

"Captain Sampson has been made commander of the fleet at Key West. Captain Evans has been ordered to take command of the battleship Iowa."

The orders to the squadron in Hampton Roads have not yet been issued.

Although the announcement did not state, it soon became known that Commodore W. S. Schley was slated to command the "Flying squadron."

This announcement was recognized as of unusual importance at this juncture. Admiral Sigsbee has been in command of the fleet at Key West throughout the period of the Maine disaster. Captain Sampson has been in command of the Iowa, but has recently been assigned to the Maine Board of Inquiry. Captain Robley D. Evans is better known as "Fighting Bob."

The next important movement was a determination to create a joint commission from the Navy and War departments, so as to bring them into harmonious action on all measures. Captain Barker, the naval aid of Secretary Long, was designated to represent the Navy Department in this common plan of action. The representative of the War Department has not yet been named. It will not be surprising for these two officers to leave Washington, as they can best arrange a joint plan of action in conference with the bureau chiefs of the two departments here.

PURCHASE OF SMALL CRAFT.

Then, at the close of the day, came an announcement from the Navy Department that it had succeeded in purchasing eight steam yachts and four steam tugs, presumably at and near New York, for use in the auxiliary navy fleet. The boats are of about 40 tons each, and are emergency vessels, to be used as torpedo boats. The yachts purchased are among the fleetest along the Atlantic coast, and are said to be somewhat similar to the Mayflower, recently purchased of the Oden Goulet estate. This acquisition to the navy is regarded as an exceptionally valuable one at the present time, as the greatest need is felt for small craft, suitable for use as torpedo- and dispatch-boats. The names and amounts paid for the various yachts and tugs are not disclosed.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES.

Throughout the day the White House presented an animated scene. Senators and Representatives of both political parties calling to confer with the President. Among the callers were Senators Culom, Fairbanks, Lodge, Aldrich, Jones, of Arkansas, and Spooner and Representative Bailey, the Democratic floor leader in the House of Representatives.

The uppermost question at all the conferences was the Maine disaster, and the anticipated action of the President in laying the report before Congress. The conferences showed that the President still hopes for peace, but that there will be no abatement of preparations to meet the other alternative.

MAINE REPORT ARRIVES.

With the report in Washington to-night, it will be laid before the Cabinet at the regular meeting at 11 o'clock to-morrow, and at that time the President and his advisers will begin the grave work of determining the action that is to be taken. The formal plan of its transmission to Congress next Monday is already arranged, but with the report and the evidence before them, the President and his advisers, for the first time, will be in a position to outline the character of the message which is to accompany the submission of the report to Congress, and to arrange definite plans of detailed procedure, which as yet has not been worked out.

The Navy Department was advised to-day of the sailing of the monitor Terror

(CONCLUDED ON PAGE EIGHT.)



MRS. WINSLOW, WHO CHR ISTENED THE KEARSARGE.



MISS BRADLEY, WHO CHR ISTENED THE KENTUCKY.